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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/PA, NEA/AIA, NEA/PI, INR/NESA, R/MR, I/GNEA,  
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LONDON FOR NEA WATCHER  
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SUBJECT: KUWAIT MEDIA REACTION -- REACTION TO THE DEATH OF THE  
FATHER AMIR, HIS HIGHNESS SHAYKH SAAD AL-ABDULLAH AL SABAH

REF: KUWAIT 0499, KUWAIT 0500

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SUMMARY  
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Wednesday, May 14, 2008

¶1. Summary and comment: On the evening of Tuesday, May 13, 2008, the Amiri Diwan announced the death of the "Father Amir" Shaykh Saad Abdullah al-Sabah. Shaykh Saad enjoyed heroic stature in Kuwait due to his long service as Crown Prince, including high-profile leadership during the 1990-91 Iraqi occupation and its aftermath. He served as Amir for a few days following the death of Shaykh Jaber in 2006, but by that time was too ill to serve as head of state. Instead, he was effectively retired with the honorific title of "Father Amir." As expected, all the newspapers are eulogizing him and his achievements, publishing op-eds, biographies and condolences. End summary and comment.

¶2. Block Quotes:

-- The editorial in Al-Watan, a conservative Arabic language Daily carried the headline "Saad of Kuwait.... Unforgettable Glory" (05/14): 'the late Sheikh Saad will remain alive in the memories of the Kuwaiti people, because it was the nature of great people to leave this world but to always be here in spirit.' The newspaper also characterized Shaykh Saad as the 'knight of development, and the architect of economic, social, educational and sports advancements... forming, with the late Amir Shaykh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al Sabah, a team that took Kuwait to the horizons of glory.' It also recounted the heroic role of the late Shaykh Saad in the 1991 war to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation.

-- Al-Qabas, a moderate Arabic language Kuwaiti daily noted in its editorial (05/14): 'another great man has left us,' but he will 'remain in the hearts of the people.' It stated that Shaykh Saad left behind a legacy of sacrifice and giving, describing him as the 'hero of the liberation from Saddam Hussein's invasion, the defender of Kuwait's sovereignty, and a man who spent his life consolidating the country's independence and prosperity.'

-- The newly established pro-government Arabic language daily, Awan (05/14) bid 'farewell to the hero of the liberation,' wondering in its editorial whether one should remember him for defending Kuwait during its difficult time, or for his patriotism, his love for the people, or his contributions to the country's advancement'.

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JONES